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## Viewing cable 05NEWDELHI8034, INDO-PAK COUNTRY TEAMS DISCUSS HOW TO ENCOURAGE

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- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#05NEWDELHI8034**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">05NEWDELHI8034</a>	<a href="#">2005-10-17 10:50</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy New Delhi</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.ndtv.com/video/player/news/wikileaks-us-cables-expose-pak-f-16s-image-problem/201017>  
<http://www.ndtv.com/article/wikileaks-revelations/us-cables-expose-pak-f-16s-image-problem-108985>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 008034

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [EPET](#) [MASS](#) [KPAO](#) [IN](#) [PK](#) [INDO](#) [PAK](#)

SUBJECT: INDO-PAK COUNTRY TEAMS DISCUSS HOW TO ENCOURAGE  
BETTER BILATERAL RELATIONS

Classified By: Charge Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

**1.** (C) Summary: Taking advantage of Ambassador Crocker's trip to India, New Delhi and Islamabad country teams on October 4 convened a round table discussion on Indo-Pak relations. Both sides agreed that, although there are few feasible avenues for direct USG involvement in this sphere -- and that direct US involvement risks poisoning the process -- there are constructive avenues we can pursue to keep the two sides moving in the right direction. In addition to Ambassador Crocker and DCM Blake, the POL, ECON, PA, DAO, and ORA sections of each Embassy participated in this exchange. End Summary.

Opening Trade a Potential Boost to Improving Relations  
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**2.** (C) All agreed that growing economic ties between India and Pakistan would improve overall relations. India's larger and growing economy -- and the South Asia Free Trade Agreement, due to take off next year -- could help fuel growth throughout much of South Asia, but some businesspeople in Pakistan fear they would be displaced by bigger Indian firms. Promoting cross-border investment would enlarge the already growing peace constituencies in both countries.

**3.** (C) Businesspeople in both countries complain that the visa regimes -- which, among other restrictions, limit the number of cities a traveler can visit -- are the most significant hurdles to overcome; other key obstacles include limited travel and transport routes and restrictive shipping policies. Many of these items are already on the New Delhi-Islamabad agenda under the auspices of the recently inaugurated Joint Commission. To help accelerate trade and

investment liberalization, the US-India and US-Pakistan Chambers of Commerce could consider coordinating their messages to New Delhi and Islamabad; business nationals could flex their leverage more effectively in this arena than any outsider. One drag on using trade to foster goodwill, however is the pervasive GOP concern that too much progress on trade ties risks sidelining the Kashmir issue.

#### Energy Cooperation: Most Prospects Have High Negatives

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14. (C) The Indian and Pakistani economies face tough challenges in securing increased domestic and imported energy supplies to sustain their rapid rates of economic growth. India has greater energy concerns, but Pakistan has fewer options to address their own declining resources. The TAP/TAPI proposal for a natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan is stymied by Ashgabat's inability to authenticate sufficient gas reserves needed for production levels above its export commitments to Russia and Ukraine -- a concern that the Asian Development Bank shared with Embassy Islamabad. Proposed gas pipelines from Bangladesh or Burma only meet some of India's growing demand, and probably would not traverse the country to supply Pakistan as well. There is commercially-feasible potential for connecting the Indian and Pakistani electrical grids in Punjab. Prospects for Pakistani investment in, or purchases from, Indian hydro-electric projects in Jammu and Kashmir still face bilateral political hurdles.

15. (C) Another area for bilateral energy cooperation -- the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline now under negotiation -- faces questions of financial and commercial viability and both the GOI and GOP are concerned about running afoul of US ILSA sanctions. (NOTE: Each country team has heard the joke from its national contacts that New Delhi and Islamabad should consider a joint demarche to Washington on ILSA. End Note.) One promising avenue for cooperation would be to expand the growing US-India Energy Dialogue to include regional initiatives.

#### Greater Transparency Can Increase Confidence

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16. (S) US officials have been unable so far to share some information with GOI/GOP interlocutors that could improve transparency and increase confidence between the two countries, due to regulations that govern intelligence sharing (i.e. the "friends on friends" policy). For example, Indian confidence would increase if we could confirm to New Delhi actions Musharraf takes to check cross-border terrorism. Similarly, especially in crisis situations prone to mutual misperception and conflicting signaling, our ability to reassure Islamabad that New Delhi does not plan to escalate could help restrain Musharraf from deciding to preempt. We understand this is a complex topic with numerous equities at stake, but addressing this issue during a period of positive bilateral relations has the potential to reap exponential benefits in crisis prevention and crisis management at a later date.

#### Balancing (But Not Hyphenating) Perceptions on F-16s

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17. (C) Recent Pakistani public statements on upcoming F-16 transfers have drawn little attention in India, but that may change as the details on the transfer firm up and are publicized. Ambassador Crocker noted that, contrary to Indian pundits who describe the F-16 as a purely nuclear platform, it has been employed by the Pakistani military to a limited degree in counter-terrorism operations, including in Waziristan this month and in Shkai in 2004. It may allay some Indian concerns to describe the transfer as giving Pakistan a non-nuclear option rather than allow them to define it as a nuclear delivery system.

18. (C) The Islamabad Country Team underlined the "mythic proportions" the F-16 has in the minds of many Pakistanis, which outstrip the platform's strategic value. To withhold the F-16s, they judge, would harden the Pakistan Army against the US and the peace process: "It would be back to the bunkers." Objectively, however, many Indian strategic analysts have acknowledged that the F-16 package would not tip the scales in Islamabad's favor.

#### Political Trends: Auspicious Timing for Progress

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19. (C) The assessment of Islamabad Country Team was that the best time for progress in Indo-Pak relations is between the present and the run-up to Pakistan's 2007 elections, when Musharraf as Army Chief can best sell the military on whatever deals emerge out of his dialogue with PM Singh. Similarly, New Delhi PolCouns noted that, in India, peace is currently a bigger vote-getter than anti-Pak demagoguery.

¶10. (C) The problem, however, is that the two governments have yet to agree on what form "progress" will take. Working under the boundaries of PM Singh's assertion that the borders in Kashmir cannot be redrawn and Musharraf's declaration that the LoC cannot be the solution, a number of plausible options emerged from discussion: limited autonomy, softening of the LoC to permit greater intra-Kashmir travel and trade, and a pan-Kashmir body that would exercise limited jurisdiction over the whole of (Pakistani and Indian) Kashmir are all constructs that would appear to be within the stated parameters.

¶11. (C) PM Singh needs good behavior from Musharraf, especially against cross-border terrorism, so he can sell this kind of out-of-the-box thinking to the Army, his coalition partners, and the country (i.e. the electorate); India also needs to know that the USG is not giving Musharraf a free ride on terrorism, or the GOI will be more inclined to take matters into their own hands, with potentially disastrous results. Musharraf needs to show some degree of progress on Kashmir and that the Pakistan Army's Kashmir policy was not an abject failure. These are not mutually exclusive requirements, although they can be difficult to finesse. Until a mutually agreeable end-game emerges, the best route is for both sides to keep moving the ball up the field.

#### Countering Mutual Misperceptions

¶12. (C) Most Indians and Pakistanis will say that they understand the people on the other side of the border, "After all, we are all from the same family." This fallacy makes countering mutual misperceptions all the more difficult -- it would be more accurate to describe the Indian and Pakistani people as being from a family that suffered a painful divorce 50 years ago, where many of the grandchildren only have a one-sided idea of what happened and why. A staggering statistic PAO New Delhi offered was that out of less than 8,000 foreign students in all of India, there are 750 Americans, and only one Pakistani. A number of USG and NGO programs bring together students and professionals from both sides of the border, but even these have to work against very large populations and the momentum of 50 years of distrust and ignorance, which has been reinforced over the years by books, films, and public discourse.

¶13. (C) End-of-session brainstorming produced several ideas deemed worth exploring:

-- Joint programs on how regional trade can be mutually beneficial, targeted to audiences other than the business community

-- Assistance -- where politically acceptable -- on reforming textbooks that include intolerant and inflammatory language

-- A program on how the media can help restrain and counter incitement during a crisis

-- Facilitating exchanges and VCDs between private schools like Pakistan's Beacon House School and the Delhi Public Schools (COMMENT: These private schools are owned and run by elites who are well known Embassy contacts, and would be easier to facilitate than working through state-owned schools. End Comment.)

What We Do (or Don't) is Less Important Than How We Do It

¶14. (C) There are few areas where the USG can directly improve Indo-Pak relations during a non-crisis period, but there are many fruitful, indirect approaches that can help build confidence between the two countries without our taking a leadership role in their affairs. There was general agreement between the two Country Teams, furthermore, that attempting to insert the USG directly into the process risks poisoning even the best ideas -- our most constructive location is on the margins offering support, not in the middle brokering deals.

¶15. (U) Ambassador Crocker has cleared this message.

¶16. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:  
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)  
BLAKE